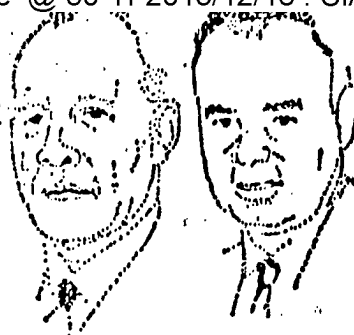


# ALLEN-SCOTT REPORT

*Inside Washington*

By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT



## Wrecking Europe Space Plans

WASHINGTON — Prime Minister Wilson is beginning to act quite a bit like President de Gaulle when it comes to Europe's space program.

While preparing to negotiate Britain's long-stalled entry into the European Common Market, Wilson is covertly threatening to wreck Europe's space plans by withdrawing Britain from that undertaking, reputedly because of rising costs and slow progress.

In this move to scuttle the all-European project, Wilson apparently is getting considerable encouragement from De Gaulle.

The issue immediately at stake is Britain's share in Europa I, a three-stage launch vehicle designed to orbit communication satellites.

This space vehicle is being developed for ELDO, the European Launcher Development Organization set up in 1961 with Australia, Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and West Germany as participants.

### FACE PROBLEMS

In terse notices sent to the other members, the Wilson government has indicated that following the impending election, Britain will "reconsider the financial and commercial aspects" of the project and may be compelled to withdraw because of the soaring costs and lagging progress.

Under the European space

agreement, Britain is paying 39 per cent of the costs, which originally were to have been around \$196 million. Current estimates put them at more than \$400 million — twice as much.

U. S. space authorities anticipated that Europa I should be ready by the end of this year. But development has fallen behind by two years, and it is now believed a vehicle cannot be completed before 1968.

### DEAD END

Without Britain's support and large contribution, the project is likely to wind up on the scrap heap, as it is centered around Britain's development of the Blue Streak missile — that country's only entry in the "big missile" race with the U.S. and Russia.

Already successfully fired at the Australia test range, the Blue Streak is to be used as the first stage or booster rocket for a three-stage space vehicle. France is producing the second stage, West Germany the third, with Italy providing the satellite.

ELDO came into existence when Britain offered to continue development of the Blue Streak for the joint European space program.

Withdrawal of this solid fuel missile will kill the program as no placement is being developed on the Continent. France has vigorously opposed purchasing a booster missile from

the U.S., although De Gaulle is permitting his scientists to carry out joint launchings of satellites with the U.S.

U.S. diplomats in Bonn report that West Germany is fearful British withdrawal from the space program will open the way for De Gaulle to press his secret plans to negotiate a space agreement with Russia. He is slated to go to Moscow in late June or July.

In discussions with West German diplomats in Paris, De Gaulle has twice dropped hints that the time is ripe for France to take the lead in working out major agreements with the Soviet, starting with space and a non-aggression pact.

### CLEARING WAY

U.S. authorities have information that talks on the space question already are underway in Moscow and Paris.

French and Russian officials reportedly are formulating an arrangement under which the Soviet would launch communication satellites into orbit for joint use with France, in exchange for strategic equipment the Reds need for their space programs.

Dr. Gerhard Stoltenberg, West Germany's minister for scientific research, flew to London last week to make urgent pleas that Britain continue in the European space venture.

Following his return to Bonn, it was learned that Stoltenberg, in effect, got nowhere. All he was able to obtain was a British foreign office assurance that no decision would be made before the election, and that the West German government would be kept informed of Wilson's "thinking."

U.S. Intelligence authorities are convinced De Gaulle is pulling the wires behind Britain's maneuvering.

leader is encouraging Wilson to shift Britain's funds from the space program to the British-French development of a supersonic aircraft, in order to win the furious three-way race with the U.S. and Russia.

The nation or combination of countries that produces the first of these giant aircraft will be in a position to capture a lion's share of the multi-million dollar plane and travel business in the 1970s.

The supersonic plane will put the capitals of the world within three hours of each other. De Gaulle and Wilson are bent on having a French-British aircraft blaze the way. The European space program is secondary to this grandiose dream.

### VIET NAM FLASHES

Chester Roning, Canada's veteran China expert, is on an unannounced mission in Viet Nam. The 71-year-old retired diplomat, who headed the Canadian delegation at the Geneva conference on Laos in 1961-62, is reputedly seeking to bring about a cease-fire through the International Control Commission. He is said to be sounding out Saigon and Hanoi on letting Canada, India and Poland, the three members of the commission, reconvene the 1964 conference as a forum for cease-fire talks.

Under Roning's proposal, the three countries and representatives of the South and North Vietnamese governments would conduct the discussions and invite Laos, Cambodia, the U.S., Russia, Red China and the British to attend. The U.S. is quietly supporting Roning's undertaking, although President Johnson reportedly doesn't believe it will get anywhere, because Hanoi and Peking want to continue the war.

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